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AN

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE

TO THE COURSE OF

INSTITUTES OF MEDICINE, &c.

IN

JEFFERSON MEDICAL COLLEGE,

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BY PROFESSOR DUNGLISON.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

PHILADELPHIA, Nov. 20th, 1843.

Prof. ROBLEY DUNGLISON.

DEAR Sir,— At a meeting of the students of Jefferson Medical College, Nov. 14, 1843, W. W. TOWNSEND, of Pa., in the chair, J. F. MILLER, of Ala., was elected secretary, and the undersigned were appointed a committee to address you in behalf of the Class, requesting for publication a copy of your highly interesting introductory lecture, which they take pleasure in assuring you they deem happily illustrative, not merely of your eloquence, but of your energy and exertions in the cause of our noble science, and in behalf of those who may have the pleasure and improve the privilege of listening to your instruction. Permit us, Sir, to convey to you the high regards and esteem of the Class.

W. A. BOYD, N. C.
C. H. BRESSLER, Philada.
W. J. WOODS, S. C.
FREDERIC ROBIE, Me.
OLIVER B. KNODE, Md.
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J. VON BRITTON, West Indies.
S. EMANUEL, Miss.
J. C. COLVAN, Del.
G. E. OUTHIT, Nova Scotia.

S. G. BAILEY, N. Y., *Sec. Committee.*

109 *South Tenth Street, Nov.* 21, 1843.

GENTLEMEN,—Permit me to return you my sincere acknowledgements for conveying to me, in such gratifying terms, the wishes of the Class, in regard to the publication of my Introductory Lecture delivered to them on the 8th inst.; and to ask you, in communicating my affirmative reply to them, to say how deeply I feel this expression of their kindness and confidence.

I am, Gentlemen,
With the greatest respect and regard,
Faithfully yours,

ROBLEY DUNGLISON.

To Messrs. WM. A. BOYD, CH. H. BRESSLER, WM. J. WOODS, &c. &c.

INTRODUCTORY.

The traveller, before setting out on a journey, from which he expects to derive gratification, feels a natural desire to cast his eye over the topography of the country; and if he be not able to attain an accurate knowledge of the whole, he can, at least, embrace a view of the most prominent portions, and bestow a passing attention on those that are of less interest. It would be well, on occasions like the present, if the lecturer could assume the place of the experienced topographer, and, for the sake of those who are about to voyage over the same territory, which he has over and over again explored, so as to have become familiar with every scene and object, could depict, in a panoramic manner, the numerous points of interest that will strike attention; the difficulties, never insurmountable, that beset the paths; and the varied flowers that so often skirt them. Yet this is impracticable. Even in an institution like our own, in which the departments of medical science are divided, and assigned to separate individuals, the time allotted to an introductory discourse is too short to enable the Professor to give more than a cursory notice of a few points; and he is compelled, therefore, to take a general view of some topic, not strictly, perhaps, confined to his own branch; and to endeavour to inculcate principles that may apply to all, and may aid the student in the arduous, but deeply interesting, investigation in which he is about to be engaged.

Were I, gentlemen, to occupy myself on the subjects that have been recently fixing the attention of investigators in my own department, opportunity would be afforded for much interesting comment. Yet these have commonly consisted of

matters of deep research, into the very nature, indeed, of the tissues and the vital manifestations exhibited by them,—and have required the introduction of so many new terms into the nomenclature of the science, that if I were to enter into a detail of them, I should necessarily be unintelligible to all except those who had made them a special object of study ; or I should have to indulge in explanations and definitions that would be but little adapted for a discourse like the present. I may say, however, in regard to those researches, that they have infused new vigour into the minds of physiologists ; and if many of them may be considered at present in a transition state, and to require fresh and fresh observations before they can be regarded as established, there is no doubt, from the zeal—amounting even to enthusiasm—of existing observers, that they will be subjected to such scrutiny, and that science must reap the rich reward.

The characteristics of the present day, and I may say of recent periods, have been, and are, an increased and abiding attention to the observance of phenomena. It is an established axiom, that facts are the basis of all sound science; but the mere record of facts, I need scarcely say, can never constitute a science. The science does not exist until general principles have been deduced from them.

I have been accustomed to mention, as an example of the wide difference between mere observation of facts, and the science founded upon them, the case of the meteorological registers that have been kept almost from time immemorial. Yet how few important principles have been drawn from them! So much, indeed, are natural philosophers impressed with this, that the whole system of observing natural phenomena has been changed ; and instead of recording the state of the barometer, thermometer, hygrometer, &c., day after day, under the hope that meteorological science may be benefitted thereby, it is now proposed by the scientific institutions of various parts of the world, that particular hours and days shall be chosen, at which simultaneous observations may be

made at short periods. The old form of meteorological registers gave us facts in abundance, but did not enable us to establish principles or correct theory.

We are accustomed, gentlemen, to hear theory placed in unworthy contrast with practice; as if theory were idle speculation; and as if mere observation of facts could make the good practitioner without reasoning or theory. I am prepared to admit, that serious evil has resulted from systems which have borne the names of theories—emanations from the fertile minds of distinguished individuals, to whose views too much homage has been paid. The fault, however, in such cases, is, that the reasoning powers of the mass are not exerted, because it is easier for them to adopt the opinions of one whose intellectual endowments they have been taught to respect, than to sift the matter for themselves.

At one time, in the case of most of our fraternity, in all countries, the art of medicine was enveloped in mystery and empiricism, and too often in fraud and imposture. Until a comparatively recent period, indeed, the doctrines and precepts of Hippocrates were reverentially followed, and the most debasing attention was paid to authority, and established routine. The dialogue put into the mouths of the physician, and the matter-of-fact maid, by Molière, was, indeed, scarcely an exaggeration.

Phys. How is the coachman?
Maid. Very well. He is dead.
Phys. Dead?
Maid. Yes.
Phys. That is impossible.
Maid. It may be impossible, but it is so.
Phys. He cannot be dead, I say
Maid. I tell you he is dead and buried.
Phys. You are mistaken.
Maid. I saw it.
Phys. It is impossible. Hippocrates says that such diseases

do not terminate till the fourteenth or twenty-first day, and it is only six days since he was taken sick.

Maid. Hippocrates may say what he pleases, but the coachman is dead.

At the present day, we rarely swear in the words of the master; but still we do not think sufficiently for ourselves; and any view, which will spare us the trouble of deep investigation, is embraced by too many, with eagerness. The systems of Brown and of Broussais were seductive, in this way, from their simplicity. If most diseases could be classed, either as diseases of excitement or of depression, and if tables were given of those that belonged to the one or the other class, it was but necessary to observe phenomena; to diagnosticate the disease, in other words; to refer to the tables, and the treatment was obvious. If every malady were a form of inflammation of the stomach and bowels, the labour of diagnosis would be spared, and the management would have to be conducted in accordance with rules laid down by the great systematist who has recently passed away from us. These royal roads have existed in all ages, and the views of Brown had for their archetypes the *strictum* and *laxum* of Themison, and the old methodical school.

A most learned and venerated preceptor—Professor James Gregory, of Edinburgh—who did not fail to express his sentiments frankly, as he ought, to his class, was in the habit of repeating the expression, that there are in medicine more false facts than false theories; a position that scarcely admits of dispute—if for no other reason, because theories are few, whilst recorded "facts," as they are termed, are almost innumerable. It is humiliating to refer to our medical Journals of former days, and also of the present, and to observe what multitudes of "facts," or observations, have been recorded; to remain, like the registers of the meteorologist, as testimonials, *monuments* of industry, and like monuments, recording only the actions of the dead.

The London Medical and Physical Journal, commonly

known as the "*yellow journal*," from the colour of its cover, was in existence we will suppose *sixty years*. It appeared regularly on the first of every month, and contained, on the average perhaps, five "original communications," so called; "facts" which had fallen under the notice, and had probably excited the deep interest of the authors. In sixty years, then, not fewer than *three thousand six hundred facts* were published in the pages of that journal alone. And how many of these form part of the *fasti* of the profession? Dare we say five? How melancholy to reflect, that so little advantage has resulted from so much time and thought bestowed upon matters, each of which appeared to the writer so replete with interest to science and to mankind; and not one of them perhaps that was not brought forward as the results of personal observation or experience! Must we not infer from this the intrinsic difficulties of correct observation; and, at the same time, the too ready admission of facts, founded upon fancied experience?

Do not let me be understood as disparaging the results of experience—of true experience. It must necessarily form the basis of all correct practice. It is on the fallacies of experience that I would animadvert; for on them are founded, not simply the errors of the medical practitioner, but every idle phantasy and form of quackery that has ever prevailed. Ask the Homœopathist or the Hydropathist, the Rock or the Brodum, on what he founds the pretensions of his remedies, and he tells you, "on experience." Ask the layman why he employs the disciples of any mushroom sect, and he replies, because the *experience* of himself, or of his friends, has led him to repose faith in them. A scientific friend, from a southern state, begged of me to detail briefly to him the main views of the Homœopathist, of which he knew nothing. He asked for information, because a respectable and intelligent member of the Society of Friends, with whom he had recently travelled, had informed him, that he had treated the pretensions of Homœopathy with ridicule, until one of his friends had consulted a homœopathist in his own case; and the result, or

experience, had so satisfied him of its advantages, that he now regularly employs a homœopathist in his own family. This gentleman, like most of those who do not belong to our profession, entertained the opinion, that every case of disease requires the administration of some article of the Materia Medica, or drug treatment. He knew nothing of that recuperative power, of that "divinity which stirs within us," and without the agency of which the efforts of the ablest physician would be vain; which knits the fractured bone, and repairs extensive injuries, often without the assistance of the surgeon; and he, doubtless, in judging of results, ascribed to treatment that which ought to have been assigned to the natural powers. And ought we to be astonished at this, when we see so much ignorance of the relation between cause and effect in our own ranks, and receive, as testimony, evidence which we would unhesitatingly discard on any other topic of investigation?

A modern intelligent writer has been fully impressed with this. "It must be admitted, indeed," he says, "that this matter of medical testimony is too lightly weighed by physicians themselves. Else, whence the so frequent description of effects and cures by agents put only once or twice upon trial, and the ready or eager belief given by those who, on other subjects, and even on the closely related questions of physiology, would instantly feel the insufficient nature of the proof. Conclusions, requiring for their authority a long average of cases carefully selected, and freed from the many chances of error or ambiguity, are often promulgated and received upon grounds barely sufficient to warrant a repetition of the trials which first suggested them. No science, unhappily, has abounded more in false statements and partial inferences; each usurping a place for the time in popular esteem, and each sanctioned by credulity, even where most dangerous in application to practice." "During the last twenty years," adds Dr. Holland, "omitting all lesser instances, I have known the rise and decline of five or six fashions in medical doctrine or treatment; some of them affecting the name of

systems, and all deriving too much support from credulity, or other causes, even amongst medical men themselves."

And if this credulity, and defective reasoning and observation exist amongst ourselves; if the *propter hoc* be so often confounded with the *post hoc* by us; can we be surprised that the unprofessional should exhibit these defects still more glaringly, and that they should even be encouraged by what they witness in us? How often are we not now doomed to meet with cases of false reasoning scarcely less extravagant than one which was narrated three hundred years ago, and which I cited in this place, on the occasion of my first introductory lecture, to illustrate views similar to those that I am now professing.

"Here, now,"—says Bishop Latimer, in the last sermon, which he preached before Edward the Sixth of England—"Here now," said he, "I remember an argument of Master More's, which he bringeth in a book, that he made against Bilney; and here, by the way, I will tell you, a merry toy. Master More was once sent into Kent, to try (if it might be) what was the cause of the Goodwin Sands, and the shelfs that stopped up Sandwich-haven. Thither cometh Master More, and calleth the country before him, such as were thought to be men of experience, and men that could of likelihood best certify him of that matter concerning the stoppage of Sandwich-haven. Among others came in afore him an old man with a white head, and one that was thought to be little less than an hundred years old. When Master More saw this aged man, he thought it expedient to hear him say his mind in this matter, for, being so old a man, it was likely that he knew most of any man in that presence and company. So Master More called this old aged man unto him, and said: 'Father,' said he, 'tell me if ye can, what is the cause of this great arising of the sands and shelves here about this haven, the which stop it up, that no ships can arrive here? Ye are the eldest man that I can espy in all this company, so that if any man can tell any cause of it, ye of likelihood can say most in it, or, at least, wise more than any other man here

assembled?' 'Yea, forsooth, good master (quod this old man) for I am well nigh an hundred years old, and no man here in this company any thing near unto mine age.' 'Well, then,' quod Master More, 'how say *you* in this matter? what think *you* to the cause of these shelves and flats that stop up Sandwich-haven?' 'Forsooth, sir,' quod he, 'I am an old man. I think that Tenterton steeple is the cause of Goodwin sands. For I am an old man, (quod he) and I may remember the building of Tenterton steeple, and I may remember when there was no steeple at all there. And before that Tenterton steeple was in building, there was no manner of speaking of any flats or sands that stopped the haven; and therefore, I think, that Tenterton steeple is the cause of the destroying and decaying of Sandwich-haven.' "

Gentlemen, this anecdote was told, as I have said, three hundred years ago, and was brought forward by its learned narrator to exhibit the faulty reasoning which then prevailed: yet it appears strikingly applicable to more recent times, and even to the period in which we live. It is good, indeed, to satisfy ourselves on this point, in order that we may learn to apply the proper remedy. We are apt to revert to antiquity for elucidations of the wild, the visionary, the offsprings of superstition and credulity; yet we need not cast our regards back so far. In running over the pages of our dispensatories, published even in modern times, we have sufficient evidences of the faulty condition of experience and reflection as they then existed, to serve as a point of comparison with those of the present day; and I must confess, that the credulity exhibited in them has rather tended to make me perhaps unduly sceptical in regard to many of the records of individual experience even now. We are bound to give every credit for honesty of purpose to the eminent individuals who framed the pharmacopœias of the different colleges of Europe; but we are equally compelled to say, that they must have been grievously mistaken, else our brethren of still more recent periods must have erred in subsequently excluding those very agents from the lists of the Materia Medica. Certainly, we

have no article of the materia medica capable of answering all the virtues that were formerly ascribed to vipers. "The main efficacy of the viperine flesh," says Mead, one of the most distinguished men of his day—one hundred years ago—"is to quicken the circle of the blood, promote its due mixture, and, by this means, cleanse and scour the glands of those stagnating juices, which, turning to acidity, are the origin of many at least of those troublesome distempers on the surface of the body, which go under the names of scrophulous, leprous, &c." I could bring forward the names of many men eminent in their day, who appeal to "long experience" in confirmation of the virtues of this article of the Materia Medica, now never heard of amongst us, except as a matter of medical history, although it, as well as the lungs of the fox, used in pulmonary affections; young puppies, formerly regarded as nervines; the dried liver of the mad dog, employed in hydrophobia; the lizard, for a long time esteemed as a diaphoretic and antisyphilitic; the dried toad, supposed to have a diuretic virtue, with numerous other offsprings of absurdity, still lingers in certain pharmacopœias, and is registered in the "*Pharmacopœia Universalis*" of Jourdan.

Every one of these articles, I repeat, was introduced on the recommendation of eminent physicians, and, before it could be received, must have been passed upon by a majority of the members of the college concerned in the formation of the Pharmacopœia. Ought we not, then, to exert a judicious scepticism before we receive the results of so-called experience, unless we are satisfied, that ample opportunities, and adequate powers of observation and reflection have really sanctioned them? In the case of all the articles I have mentioned, subsequent experience showed, that the effects were *consecutive* rather than *consequent*, and they were properly discarded. They were examples of delusion not exceeded, except in notoriety, by those to which I directed the attention of the class in my last introductory lecture—a species of delusion from mistaking the *post hoc* for the *propter hoc*, which,—as Dr. Paris remarks, when investigating the revolutions

and vicissitudes that remedies have undergone in medical, as well as popular opinion,—reminds one of the story of the Florentine quack, who gave the countryman six pills, which were to enable him to discover an ass that he had lost. The pills were cathartic, and beginning to operate on his road home, he was compelled to retire into a wood, where he found his ass. The clown soon spread a report of the wonderful success of the quack, who, doubtless, as Dr. Paris remarks, reaped an ample reward from the proprietors of strayed cattle !

The same kind of fallacy of experience leads to those idle fashions in regard to particular remedies, which, like all hobbies, have attracted merited ridicule. The witticisms of Molière and of Le Sage were founded on follies that doubtless existed at the time in the profession, and that are still not unfrequently witnessed. We daily, indeed, notice the failings of the profession reflected in the credulities and absurdities of the people. Even in professional history, we find that epithets have been applied to classes and to individuals, which have been acquired in this manner. These are more common amongst the mercurial French, who are eminently alive to the ludicrous; and, accordingly, we even see admitted into the French medical lexicons the title of *médecins stercoraires* applied to those who are accustomed to treat all diseases by purgatives—*repurgare et reclysterisare*, to use the language of a great satirist. When, too, acupuncturation was revived in France,—for it, as well as moxibustion, is an old Chinese and Japanese operation,—it was so extensively and indiscriminately employed in the French Hospitals—not more than thirty years ago—that the patients in one of them actually revolted against the *piqueurs médecins*, or "pricking doctors," as they called them. We smile at the credulity of the author of a Japanese treatise on the moxa, who oracularly proclaims as the results, doubtless, of his experience, "Chap. 3. Women, who have done breeding, must have three cones burnt on the navel:" "Chapter 4. Women, that would be glad to have children, must have eleven cones burnt

on the side of the twenty-first vertebra ;" yet, on the revival of the Chinese operation of acupuncture, it was employed in fractures, and other cases almost as irrationally. Impressed with the value of colchicum as a sedative agent, a valued friend, now no more, who was one of the first to draw attention to this article of the Materia Medica as a substitute for blood-letting, published a number of cases of whitlow, in which he conceived its internal use had operated a cure ; and I have been astonished to hear of the insignificant cases in which the fashionable remedy—most valuable in appropriate cases—the iodide of potassium, has been employed. Wherever enthusiasm exists in regard to the action of any article of the Materia Medica, ample allowances must be made ; otherwise the sober, cool observer, who repeats the trials with it, will inevitably be disappointed. It is to be deplored that any enthusiasm, sufficient to cause a remedy to be what is called "fashionable," should ever exist amongst us. The very epithet is significative of change ; that change inevitably occurs, and then we have another record of the vacillation in medical practice, of which the public eagerly lay hold, when they have to assign reasons for having recourse to the medicines of the charlatan.

All addiction to exclusive methods of treatment, on the part of the profession, is to be regretted ; and hence we regard with sorrow, not unmixed with feelings of a less complimentary character, those who leave the profession they have embraced to join any system, which professes to have discovered a mode of attaining, by easy steps, that which has engaged the close and patient investigation of the most gifted for ages ; whilst unmixed contempt is combined with our regret for those who, from mercenary motives, debase themselves to a level with the most ignorant empiric. On a former occasion, when speaking of delusions, I mentioned the *Wassercur* or *Hydropathy* of the German Priessnitz, and stated the rising enthusiasm in regard to it on the other side of the Atlantic, which has even extended to this. I refer to it now for the purpose of stating that it has recently afforded

us a specimen of exclusivism on the part of a respectable, but not profound, member of our profession, which is calculated to exert an unhappy influence on the public, in the mode I have described. The name of Sir Charles Scudamore may be familiar to some of you already, from his treatise on the gout, and from his extravagant confidence in the efficacy of iodine and conium inhalations in pulmonary consumption. It appears, that last April he went to Gräfenberg, where Priessnitz, the inventor, if I may use the term, of the *Wassercur*, resides, to test the merits of the course from personal observation. He was himself an invalid, and was doubtless impelled to the journey by what he had heard—the mode, by the way, in which all quackery is extended—of the wonderful cures that had been effected by Priessnitz. Sir Charles had suffered for many years from rheumatic and nervous headache, with noises and deafness in the left ear; and was constantly dependent upon medicine for the action of the bowels. His treatment began on the 18th of April, a few days after his arrival, and continued until the 20th of May. The result was satisfactory,—his health having improved in all the points in which it was defective. Since his return to England, he has established himself at a celebrated watering place as a Hydropathist; and already invalids have not only crossed the Atlantic, and placed themselves under his care, but sufficient time has elapsed for the results to be trumpeted back to us.

I am far, gentlemen, from classing Hydropathy with Homœopathy, and some of the other delusions on which I have had occasion to comment in this place. In Hydropathy, we are not called upon to believe, that a vial, filled with a powder containing an infinitesimal quantity of arsenic, may be taken with impunity, whilst the minutest portion of it, especially if the vial have been shaken once or twice, might produce wonderful results; or that certain articles can act upon the right arm, or the right leg, and others on the left. In it, we have no phantasies learnedly expressed by the motto, *similia similibus curantur.*—

The *Leintuch*, or the application of the wet sheet; the *Abreibung*, or rubbing down with the same; the use of the sweating blanket, the patient being packed up in blanket, feather-bed, and wadded counterpane until he sweats; the different forms of baths, and wet bandages; the drinking of eight to twelve glasses of water daily, each glass holding nearly three-quarters of a pint; the coarse, hard fare, and the regulated exercise, are well calculated to induce a new action in the functions, and to afford relief in a multitude of chronic cases. Yet, medical skill is required to judge accurately of the affections in which such a severe treatment would be beneficial or injurious. One of the latest English papers I have received states, that a man in Lismore, Ireland, had died of the cold-water cure, and that the wife and relatives of the deceased were making loud lamentations on the occasion.

I have no doubt, gentlemen, that the Wassercur is often serviceable; and it becomes the profession to regard it, with Sir Charles Scudamore, as an addition—he says, a valuable addition—to the resources of the medical art, rather than as its foe or rival. We are not justified in discarding it because it has emanated from an unprofessional and unlettered peasant, any more than we are justified in rejecting the vapor-bath, because it is a main remedy with the Thompsonians. The enlightened physician can cull something valuable from every sect or system, and from every mode of treatment that has been employed even by the empiric. Homœopathy instructs him, that a multitude of diseases may be treated by trusting to the recuperative powers, to the powers of Nature, of whom, as has been well said, he ought to be the minister and the interpreter; his very name, *physician*, is, indeed, derived from her. Hydropathy instructs him that many chronic maladies may be brought to a happy issue without drug treatment, or after ordinary remedies have failed; and it is a matter of no slight moment to be able to establish this. If I were asked what single circumstance tends most, at the present day, to the retardation of Therapeutics, I would say

unbounded confidence in drugs; in the adaptation of special articles of the Materia Medica for special morbid conditions. The man of the clearest views has the greatest simplicity in prescribing, and employs the fewest agents. Not one is added without a clear and definite object: but he, whose intellect is confused, or who is perplexed in the diagnosis, or with the treatment, is apt to throw together the most heterogeneous and often opposing substances, so as to justify the somewhat censorious, but too true, remark of a great medical philosopher, that "it is easier to prescribe than to think." The young graduate too frequently commences his career with unbounded confidence in the panoply with which he can combat disease; he is not long, however, in practice, before he discovers that his confidence in drugs must be materially diminished; and before he has attained a single lustre, his faith has become less and less reposed in individual articles of the Materia Medica, and more in the great principles of Hygiène and Therapeutics. A well-stocked cabinet of Materia Medica, for practical use, is not as important to the young physician, as a full chirurgical armamentarium to the young surgeon; and unless the mind is well constituted, the situation of resident-physician in our large institutions is any thing but desirable. It either encourages polypharmacy, or, owing to the results, which the young physician had too confidently expected from his prescriptions, not having supervened, he is led to believe that there is great uncertainty in medicine. Are we to be astonished at the satire levelled at the profession for its uncertainty, when we refer to the prescriptions of former times, and find not fewer than seventy-two articles, and sometimes more, in the same compound formula! "Nature," says one of our own profession,—a man of wit and philosophy, but probably an unphilosophical practitioner,—to D'Alembert; "Nature is fighting with disease; a blind man, armed with a club,—that is the physician,—comes to settle the difference. He first tries to make peace; when he cannot accomplish this, he lifts his club, and strikes at random: if he strikes Nature, he kills Nature."

In country practice the evil of over-prescribing cannot exist so readily as in towns. The neat, compact case on the crupper of the practitioner's horse conveys all the remedies that he employs in ordinary cases; and is doubtless amply sufficient. "Give me," says one of the most distinguished surgeons of modern times—Sir Astley Cooper—"give me opium, tartarized antimony, sulphate of magnesia, calomel, and bark, and I would ask for little else. These are adequate to restore all the actions of the body, if there be power of constitution to admit of the restoration; and disease, as far as I know, is either itself a deviation in the performance of some function, or at all events is always marked by such a circumstance."

This is the language, not of a great medical philosopher, for he had no claims to be considered as such; but of one who had been more extensively engaged in the practice of his profession than any other person, perhaps, of ancient or modern times. It will be admitted, that his annual income of upwards of twenty thousand pounds sterling, or one hundred thousand dollars, wholly derived from his profession, is an index of unequalled professional employment. The list of Sir Astley is, however, too much restricted; and it excludes some of the most valuable and most energetic articles of the Materia Medica. But although one slightly more extended might be adapted for most cases of disease that present themselves to practitioners, it is indispensable for him to be practically acquainted with the modes of preparation, and uses of a much larger number. Hence, pharmacopœias and dispensatories are prepared as guides to him in these matters; and hence, on the occasion of the last revision of the Pharmacopœia of the United States, my learned friends, with whom I had the pleasure and the profit of being associated, and myself did not feel ourselves justified in farther reducing the number of articles of the Materia Medica, and of the preparations. Yet, although opulent, too opulent perhaps, it stands in marked contrast

with the older works of the same kind; as marked as the present methods of observing and of recording observations contrast with those of former periods.

Every practitioner endeavours to carry, in his recollection, the precise difference which he notices from day to day in the condition of his patients; but this must be far inferior to the record which he daily makes approximately by numbers, from which he can deduce his averages. Averages and numerical methods can in no case, however, afford more than an approximation to the truth; yet the approximation is closer than can be attained in any other manner; and perhaps, as a recent eminent writer has remarked, "through medical statistics may be the most secure path into the philosophy of medicine." In an extensive practice this method may not be easy; but the difficulties constitute no real objection to the value of the plan for shedding light on the history of disease. Statistics are not, however, so easy of application to therapeutics,—confessedly the most difficult of all the departments of medical sciences, because on it is concentred a knowledge of every other; and it requires not merely correct observation, but the constant exercise of the reasoning power. Hence, in part, why diagnosis is so much more attended to than therapeutics, which, after all, is the final object of the science of medicine,—the treatment of disease, in other words. The extent to which the mind of the observer was at one time, and recently, monopolized by one form of observation, physical diagnosis, was really lamentable. In many of the hospitals, of France more especially, the great object of the attending physician appeared to be to discover the nature of the disease; and the treatment was left to the *elève interne*, or resident physician. So is it at the present day with *Hæmatology*, or observation of the blood. Blood is there drawn in all diseases, in order to detect, by the nicest evaluation, the ratio of its main constituents to each other; and after this has been determined, but little attention is, in too many cases, paid to treatment. An eminent me-

dical friend, who has just returned from Paris, informs me that it really appeared to him,—he could not, indeed, resist the conclusion,—that the Physician did not prescribe treatment in many cases, under the apprehension that if he did, he might thereby disturb the *post mortem* appearances.

Still, notwithstanding all this, and the intrinsic difficulties of the subject, we have seen that therapeutics has experienced of late years eminent improvement. But whilst its march has been onward, the public have remained, in regard to it, stationary. As the superstitions, which, in the age of either of the Bacons, possessed the higher intellects, are still cherished by the most benighted of the present day, so the idle and irrational beliefs of our professional forefathers cling with pertinacity to the unprofessional. In the Philadelphia Hospital, I constantly see the protecting amulet suspended round the neck, to ward off from the wearer all that is unpropitious. To be born with the membranes unbroken, or with a caul, is yet esteemed "lucky;" and the dried membranes themselves, or the caul, are supposed to prevent the possessor from being drowned; because, I presume, the child was not drowned at birth in the waters of the amnion. Not long ago, a caul was advertised in the London Times, at the moderate price of seven guineas or nearly forty dollars.

The dried liver of the mad-dog, which, as I stated, figured in some of the Pharmacopœias of continental Europe, in that of Wirtemberg, for example, is still used as a preventive of hydrophobia. Charms of various kinds, relics of antiquity, from which we have our word *Carminatives*—originally derived from *carmen*, a verse charm, and afterwards extended to a class of remedies which appeared to act like a charm—are still invoked by the vulgar. About a year ago, one of my scientific friends, not of the profession, but indirectly connected with it, put into my hands the copy of a charm, which had fallen under his own observation. The child of a respectable individual in the country, near Philadelphia, was bitten by a dog, which was supposed to be

rabid. The father very properly sought medical aid from the city; but, in the mean time, it was recommended to the mother, that a person who had been very successful in the prevention of hydrophobia, should be permitted to *prescribe*, which was agreed to. Accordingly, he directed an infusion of a common and innoxious vegetable; and, in addition, that a certain paper, which he furnished, should be swallowed three times a day. The father had a natural curiosity to open the paper, on which he found written:

Packs		Mocks		Packs
Packs		×		Mocks
Erin	×	0	×	Bocks

I wish I could say, gentlemen, that the supporters of these follies were the most ignorant and debased of the people; for then, in the general diffusion of light, for which the present age is so much distinguished, we might indulge a confident hope, that the mists would be gradually dispersed. There are men in every community, whose credulity is unlimited, and who, whilst they are sceptical in regard to whatever proceeds from those who have devoted a life of assiduous attention to the investigation of the laws that govern the human body, in health, and disease, greedily devour every thing that emanates from such as have the boldness to arrogate unusual pretensions, and are sufficiently hardy in their empirical assertions. I shall not specify delusions that are now rife amongst us, but shall allude to one only which is recently defunct, and whose ashes I shall not much disturb. I mean the use of brandy and salt. Fully impressed with the conviction, that this compound, if it did not render the patient immortal, ought to make the discoverer so, charitable, but weak and credulous, persons were energetically employed here and elsewhere, in distributing pamphlets setting forth its miraculous healing powers:—for the zeal exhibited in such cases is wonderful, such as is never exerted, except where there is something equivocal and mysterious: yet, had these philanthropists been aware of the history of the compound, and of the springs that moved the original proposer, they

would, methinks, have paused in their zealous endeavours. As a part of its history, I shall cite to you a few recent remarks of Dr. James Johnson, the editor of the *London Medico-Chirurgical Review*, on a pamphlet entitled, "*Brandy and Salt—a Remedy for various Diseases. By J. A. Vallance. Price 6d.*" "Morrison's pills," he says, "that lion or leviathan of allopathy—the lung-stretcher of Ely place," [a notorious consumption curer, but a regularly educated physician, I regret to say]—"mustard seed—animal magnetism—nay, homœopathy itself may now hide their diminished heads. 'BRANDY and SALT' cure all diseases, and the remedy is within the reach of every individual from a duke to a dustman. There never was a more ingenious invention, a more felicitous combination, than 'brandy and salt.' The brandy makes the heart glad, and the salt increases the thirst for more brandy! Lucky invention—especially for the great promulgator, who has an extensive brandy manufactory in France. None but the veritable *eau-de-vie* will have any virtue in combination with salt." And this compound was *infallible*, I presume, in forty diseases—in gout, consumption, inflammation of the lungs, asthma, scrofula, palpitation, inflammation of the brain, cholera, insanity, cancer, "fevers of all kinds," paralysis, tic douloureux, spinal complaints, inflammation of the bowels, mortification, and twenty other grievous maladies:—a large list of cases, cured of the various diseases enumerated in the pamphlet, being published at the end. Mercenary motives, as in every similar case, formed the foundation of this base quackery; but they cannot always be so glaringly exposed; yet there is probably not a medical friend surrounding me, who did not find, two years ago, this brandy and salt officiously urged on his patients suffering under different protracted maladies.

There is, unfortunately, no limits to human gullibility, no end to the forms which it is perpetually assuming. The art of medicine is presumed by the uninitiated to be enveloped in mystery, which no effort of theirs can penetrate, unless

they should happen to be born with a "turn for physic," or be the "seventh son of a seventh son;" and hence they abandon themselves to the wildest and most visionary conceits, and yield their faith to all who are dishonest enough, and, withal, bold enough to pretend to superior knowledge; no matter whether the pretension consist in being able to cure consumption, or to foretel future events; and if the profession benevolently desire to arrest the onward course of the delusion, it is too often said, that they are interested parties, and then are gravely told by the believers, that a Galileo and a Harvey were subjected to similar "persecutions."

I was lately pressed by a professional gentleman to visit with him a woman, at the time in this city, and still here for aught I know to the contrary, who, when, in what is called a *magnetic state*, could, he firmly believed, at my will, accompany me in spirit to any patient I might have at the time under treatment, and tell me exactly what was his or her precise pathological condition. I positively refused to see the woman, under the apprehension, that my visit might be construed into a belief, on my part, that such omniscience was possible. I have heard no more of her, but it appears, from the Boston Medical Journal, that females, said to possess such gifts have been obtaining money under similar pretences in Boston.

It would seem, gentlemen, that there must be some delusion to occupy mankind, and that as one dies a natural death, for it is never destroyed by violence, another always usurps its place, or rather succeeds almost as it were by right of inheritance. As a general rule, mankind are fond of activity, on the part of the practitioner; and the worthy and resigned old matron, who exclaimed, when she depicted the last scene of a young acquaintance to an illustrious friend of mine: "Thank God, every thing was done for him, that could have been, for he was bled seven and twenty times," was true to nature.

A gentleman,—whom I well recollect as a contemporary of my own on setting out in practice, and whose lot has been long cast in a country, far removed from our own,—in his "*Life of a Travelling Physician*," which is an exceedingly

interesting representation of a professional career, has well depicted this feeling on the part of practitioner and patient. He is describing his attendance, soon after graduation, at a dispensary in London, in the absence of the attending physician. "In a few days," says Sir George Lefevre, "I was installed in the Doctor's chair, and was myself become a doctor *de facto*. It required more tact to manage the dispensary pupils, than the dispensary patients. I found some of these said pupils my seniors in more than age, and very inquisitive. A good face upon difficulties, and carry all with a high hand. I was an advocate for decided practice, as it is styled; a decided practitioner; and there is no more certain way of imposing upon people, than by impressing upon them this idea. Say that a man is a decided practitioner, it is enough. Nobody will inquire in what sense, bad or good, this word 'decided' is to be taken. I bled, purged and blistered decidedly, and the cases being of an inflammatory character, as upon Gil Blas's *debut*, it happened to be decidedly good practice."

Yet amidst this general feeling amongst the community in favor of the bold, decided practitioner, we have the incongruity of thousands placing their faith in the most inactive system of treatment, that has ever been proposed; more inactive even than the expectant medicine of the Stahlians. I allude to Homœopathy:—so inactive, that in the last introductory lecture, delivered before the Washington University of Baltimore, and repeated at the spring session of Castleton Medical College, Vermont, Professor Reese has challenged the following conclusive experiment, but has not been responded to. "We are ready," says he, "to submit our own persons" (meaning his own person) "to the ordeal of swallowing five hundred of these infinitesimal doses at once, not of any one drug, but of any five hundred drugs thus reduced, and repeat the potion every five minutes during our waking hours for a month, if need be." And he adds, "if any one of their 'drug sicknesses' is produced in our own persons by this fiery ordeal, or any other morbid effect whatever, perceptible to the most acute among the sect, we will renounce the insti-

tutes of rational medicine, and henceforth teach and practice the transcendental mysticism of homœopathy upon ourselves and others."

Homœopathy is shrouded in mystery; the sect, if I may so term it, emanated in a *Nebelland*, or misty land—for so Germany is to most of those who adopt it; it deals in profound, unintelligible, and irrational hypotheses, which are arrayed in the imposing forms of the exact sciences, so far as appertains to the numerical divisions and subdivisions of the doses of medicines; and is designated by a name of "thundering sound," derived from a learned language, and as unintelligible to the many as are its hypotheses. The ignorant, therefore, resign their faith at once; whilst the better informed, but scarcely less credulous, endeavour, perhaps, at first to comprehend it; but led to believe that all medicine is a mystery, they find it unfathomable, and surrender at discretion; excusing themselves, if they find it necessary to account for their infatuation, by the assertion, that they yielded to the observation of results. Yet, we have seen, that the accurate appreciation of results is at times extremely difficult. That the patient has recovered or died is self-evident; but a knowledge of the precise agency of the different remedies employed may demand a due consideration of all the physiological, pathological, and therapeutical bearings of the subject; and, withal, no little power of discrimination even on tne part of the practitioner. An illustration of this is afforded in a well-known case, cited by Dr. Paris in his Life of Sir Humphry Davy. Dr. Beddoes, who was a man of rare enthusiasm, having hypothetically inferred, that the inhalation of nitrous oxide gas might be a specific for palsy, a patient was selected for trial, and placed under the care of Davy, at the time assistant to Beddoes. Before administering the laughing gas, it occurred to Davy, that it would be well to ascertain the temperature of the patient's body, by the thermometer placed under the tongue. The paralytic, who had been deeply impressed by the enthusiasm of Beddoes, with the certainty of the success of the remedy of which he knew nothing, soon after the thermometer was placed in his mouth, believing that

this was the grand curative agent, remarked to Davy that he felt something better. It was suggested, therefore, aside, that nothing more should be done; but he was requested to return on the following day. The same form was then gone through, and with the same results; and, at the end of a fortnight, the man was dismissed cured; no nitrous oxide—no agent of any kind—having been employed, except the thermometer. Now, the result in this case was the cure of the patient, and the only remedy employed was the thermometer. Are we then justified in recording, that the thermometer, placed under the tongue, will cure palsy? Certainly, with as much propriety as we see recorded in the homœopathic works, that the north pole of the magnet cures fistula in ano; or a decillionth (a fraction so minute, that the opulent English language is insufficient to express it) of a grain of flint cures epilepsy. The rational therapeutist is not, however, satisfied with a knowledge of the mere fact, that the paralysis disappeared after the use of the thermometer. He inquires into the mode in which the result was induced: he is not long in referring it to the influence exerted by the *moral* over the *physique;* and he classes the thermometer, with Perkinism and its congenerous arts, amongst agents, that produce their effects through the new impressions which they make through the senses.

And is there, it may be asked, no mode of dispelling this credulity, and of guarding the uninitiated against the wiles of the mercenary and designing? To a certain extent there is. To eradicate the evil is wholly impracticable. I have endeavoured to show that irrational beliefs and practices, now in vogue amongst the unprofessional, prevailed at one time amongst the faculty themselves: and what has produced the change in the latter? A better system of observation, and of tracing effects to their causes; a greater degree of exactness, in short, in all our methods of research. A knowledge of these facts, and of the rigid system of induction, pursued by those who keep pace with the advanced and advancing condition of medical science, ought to make the better informed of the laity hesitate before they adopt these ridiculous credences:

and their example could scarcely fail to exert a powerful influence on those who are less gifted—an influence which would far exceed all the enactments for the suppression of empiricism, that could be passed by the wisest legislature, because it would tend to dispel that ignorance and its handmaid—if not its offspring—credulity, on which empiricism feeds and fattens.

But much will depend upon the profession themselves. Much has already been done, by discarding that mysterious and pedantic language, which was in vogue amongst practitioners, even so late as the time of Fielding and of Smollett; and in openly exhibiting, that there are no arcana in our science,—nothing but what is open to all, and capable of being comprehended by all, who will bestow adequate attention upon it.

Much, my young friends! will rest upon you, and upon all who are looking forward to become members of a profession, the intrinsic dignity and usefulness of which has been so well and so fervidly depicted by my colleagues who have preceded me. Be impressed with the responsible character of the calling. Feel, that the true dignity of medicine is to be maintained by the superior learning, abilities, and conduct of those who profess it. Be open and candid, disdaining all mystery and artifice. Then—as I have elsewhere said—you may set at naught the ridicule and abuse to which the science has been, and is, exposed from those who are unacquainted with its character and resources. Prosperity and happiness will attend you. The infant, on the maternal lap, will be taught to lisp your name with gratitude. The widow and the fatherless, even in their bereavement, will bless your skilful and benevolent exertions, though unsuccessful. The affectionate parents, who have watched over your youth, and witnessed with solicitude your ripening manhood, will glory in you. Your Alma Mater, which sheds upon you her highest honours, will cherish you, as the fond mother cherishes her offspring; and your country will be proud to rank you amongst the most useful and the most meritorious of her citizens.